

# **RUSSIA**

## **Russian East Coast**

### **Kamchatka, Commander Islands, Kuril Islands and Sakhalin**

**25<sup>th</sup> May – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019**



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## Introduction

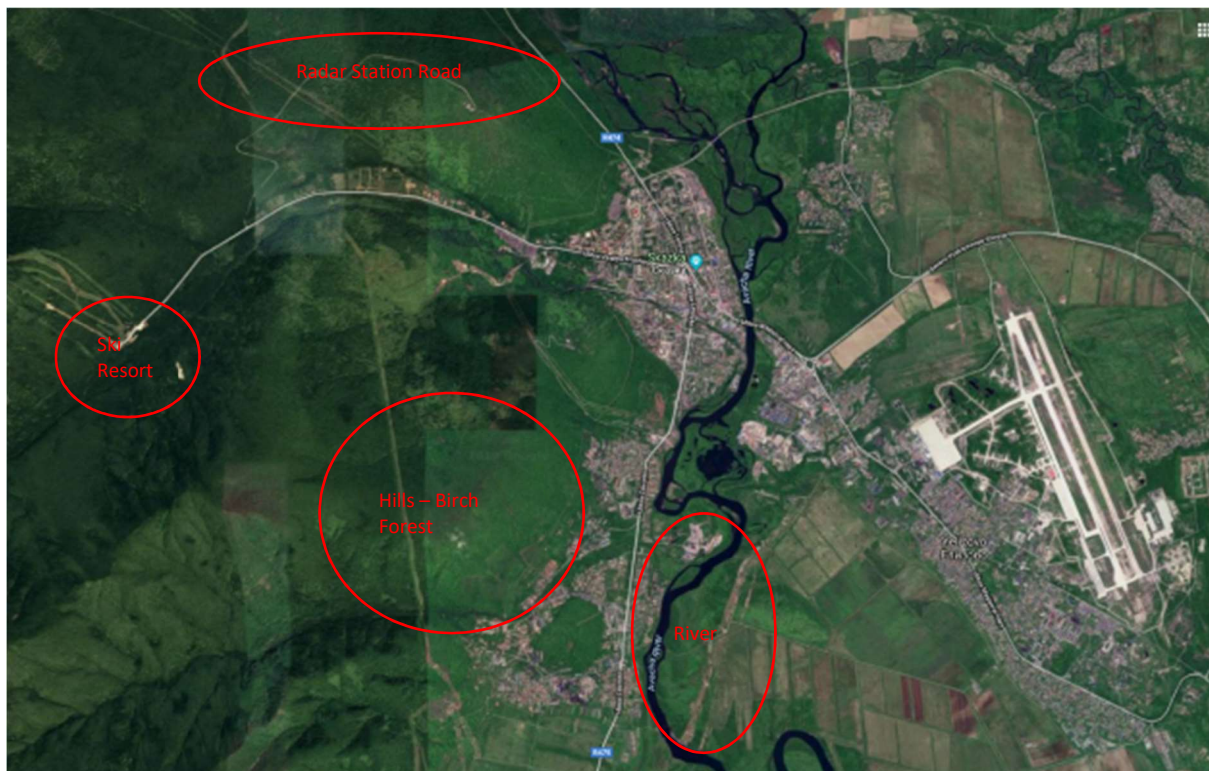
I decided it was time for a change. I have been to plenty of jungles, hiked enough mountains and seen plenty of Pacific islands so why not a complete change and explore the coast of East Asia and hopefully see some incredible alcids a few Whales and some stunning scenery.

## Logistics

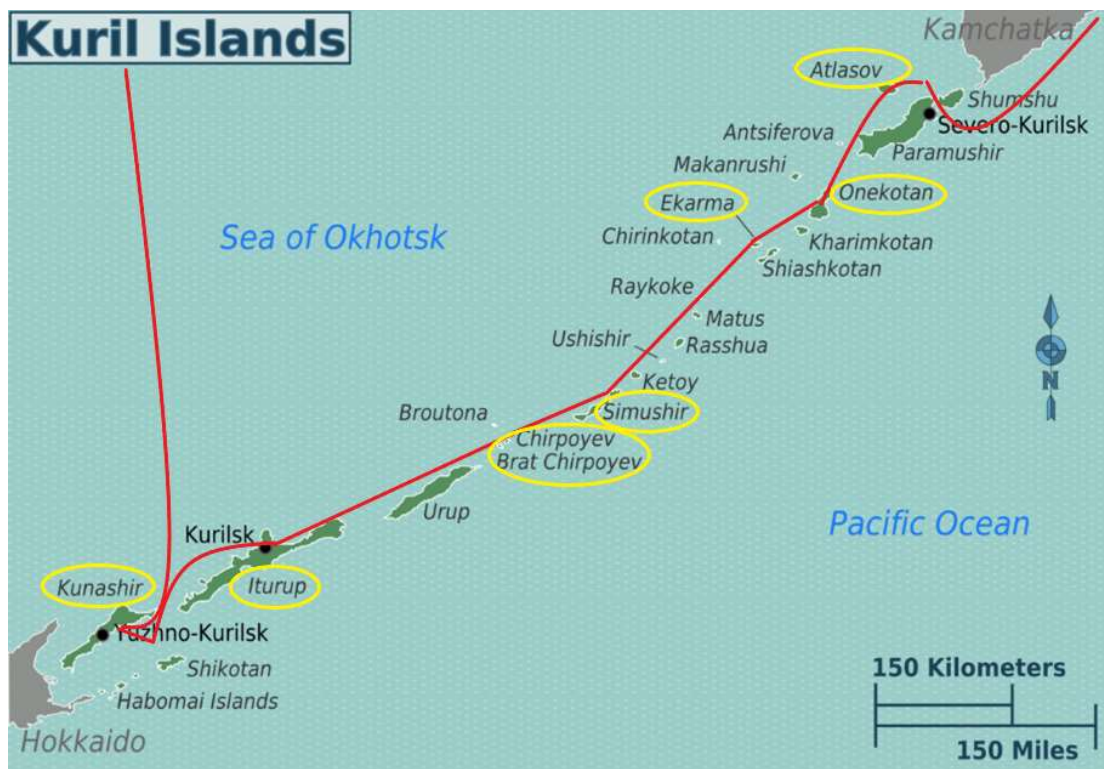
Heritage appear to be the only operator who regularly run trips to this area and as they have been doing it for many years, they have all the logistics regarding special permits etc worked out. It is certainly not a dedicated birding trip. A lot of the landings were relatively brief only once was there an option to take a pack lunch and stay on the islands longer and it sometimes felt that they wanted to get you back on the boat as soon as possible. However, it does get you to some very remote places which are otherwise inaccessible and seeing the vast flocks of alcids counterbalance the negatives but maybe it's a trip best left for one's later years. The trip was booked through Wildwings <http://www.wildwings.co.uk/> and as usual they were efficient and very proactive with regards answering questions and helping with the paperwork. Getting to the starting and finishing points was a bit more difficult as the only connecting flight from Hong Kong to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky didn't arrive until early Tuesday morning which was cutting it fine especially if the flight was delayed or cancelled as the boat was due to leave mid-afternoon so in the end we had to fly to Seoul and then Vladivostok and onto Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. On the way back the return flight to Seoul left late morning, which was too early, so we had to overnight in Sakhalin and then returned directly to Hong Kong via Vladivostok though this did give us some birding time in Sakhalin which was quite was certainly worthwhile.

## Sites

During the trip we travelled over 2000 nautical miles starting at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky sailing north to the Commander Islands then back down the Kamchatka coast before Island hopping south along the Kuril's and eventually heading north across the Sea of Okhotsk to Sakhalin. Details of where we went can be found in the day to day itinerary. In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky due to the flight schedule we spent two days birding near the city prior to the cruise. We spent most of this time around Yelizovo close the airport and one afternoon at the mouth of Avacha Bay. In Sakhalin we spent an afternoon and a morning birding Park Gagarina and surrounding hills.



*Birding Sites Around Yelizovo*



The Ring of Fire Cruise



### **Accommodation Food Weather**

For most of the trip we were aboard the Professor Khromov better known as the Spirit of Endeby as nobody can pronounce the real name. We had a twin cabin which had plenty of storage. All food was provided.



*Professor Khromov better known as the Spirit of Endeby*

In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky instead of staying in town we stayed at Martha's Bed and Breakfast <https://explorekamchatka.com/> in Yelizovo which was 15mins from the airport and walking distance to good birding areas. It was an excellent choice. She was a great host and cooked us breakfast at 5am each morning and organised a driver for a day. She also picked us up from the airport. In Sakhalin we stayed at the Mega Palace Hotel which was opposite Park Gagarina which was good for birding and was also close to more extensive forest.

### **References**

Trip Reports from cloudbirders <https://www.cloudbirders.com/tripreport>. Though most of them were tour company reports however the report by Holmberg of his 2016 trip was useful

Books - Birds of East Asia - Mark Brazil

## Itinerary

### Sunday May 26<sup>th</sup>

Arrived in Vladivostok from Seoul in the middle of the night and after a few hours layover we were on the early morning flight to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. As we approached the airport we had stunning views of the snow-capped volcanos that dominate the city.



As it was a domestic flight and a small airport, it was not long before we collected our bags and meet up with Martha our host for the next couple of days. It was only a short drive back to her B & B and whilst she made some tea we freshened up before eagerly setting out to the river just behind her house. As we walked along the edge of the river a couple of Common Terns flew by and in a small patch of willows a Rustic Bunting was in full song. After an hour we decided to head to the hills, so we back tracked along the river and headed up through an area of garages and then a meadow and entered the forest. The forest consisted mainly of birch trees and although it was the end of May none of them were in leaf and this coupled with the dull weather made birding hard going with just a few singing Olive-backed Pipits.



*Eurasian Nuthatch*



*Rustic Bunting*

By now it had started to rain a little and as we walked up along a track fatigue started to set in and we began to wonder if we were wasting our time and if we should turn back when suddenly we flushed female Black-billed Capercaillie which flew no more than 20 meters past us ..... Very unexpected. This re-vitalised us and we continued up along the track but as the rain got heavier and the birds fewer we decided to call it a day and head back down calling in at the Castle Restaurant for dinner and then back to Martha's for a well earned sleep.

### Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May

Awake at 5am after a good night's sleep and were soon tucking into a great breakfast that Martha had cooked. Igor our driver arrived as planned at 6am. It had snow overnight and there was a thin layer of

snow on the ground. It was cold and overcast and the hills were shrouded in mist, so we decided to start in the woods around the ski station a short drive away. The dull conditions didn't make birding easy, but the hour spent there produced Eye-browed Thrush, Hawfinch, Willow Tit and Bulfinch.

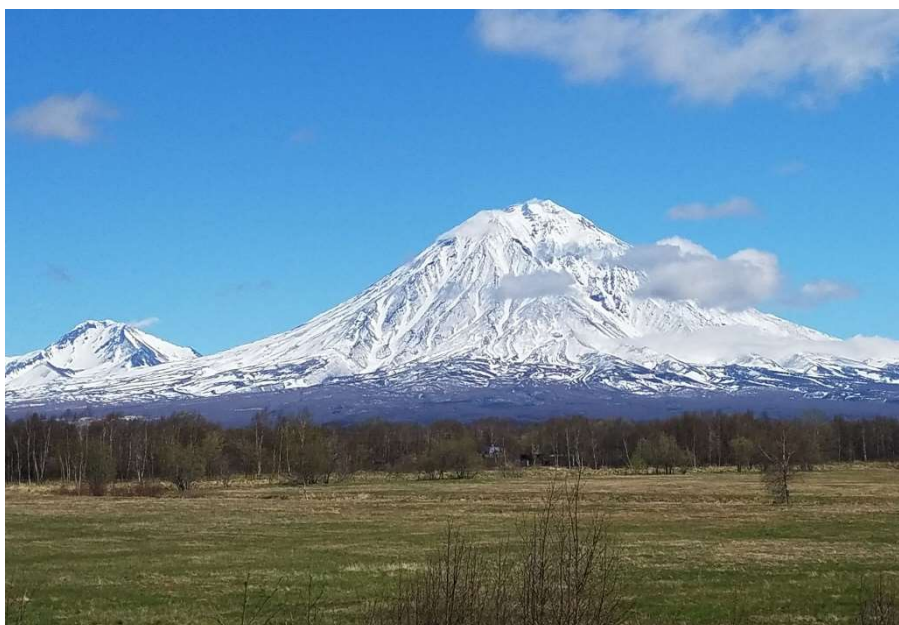


*Willow Tit*



*Eye-browed Thrush*

By now it had started to warm up and the sun looked like it may appear, so we moved onto the radar station road running from close to the ski station up to the top of a nearby hill. At the top it was still misty, but it was lifting slowly so Ignor drove down the road and we followed slowly on foot. As the mist lifted the birds started to sing and become very active and soon, we had seen Grey Bunting, Rustic Bunting and Taiga Flycatcher. About halfway down the road we came across a track leading into the forest. Taking this we headed in and after a few hundred metres flushed a female Capercaillie. Other birds seen included Eurasian Nuthatch and Brambling. Returning to the road we carried on down to where the car was parked and set off to Avacha Bay area taking in the views of the volcano's on route.



*Koryaksky Volcano*

A quick lunch was had on route before heading to the bay. The first port of call was a large inlet by the road which held a big flock of Scaup, and our first of many Slaty-backed Gulls of the trip. Continuing on we stopped at a marshy area and explored it from the road. The marsh held a large flock of Black-headed Gulls a few Black-legged Kittiwakes and Red-necked Grebes and the surrounding bushes a Reed Bunting.



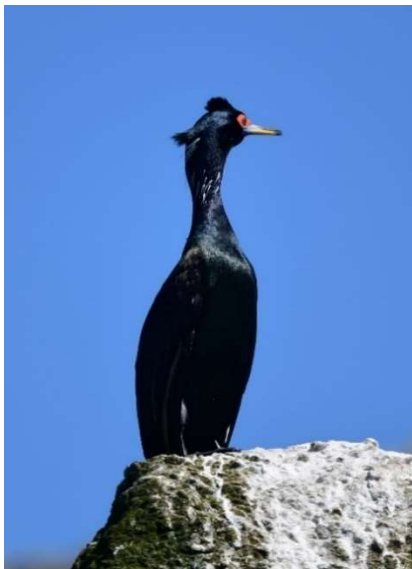


*Slaty-backed Gull*



*Scaup*

Our final stop was a cove surrounded by cliffs. We scanned the sea for a while hoping for an Auk but the best, we could do was a Long-tailed Duck. Walking along the beach we checked out the cliffs which held many Red-faced Cormorants with a few Pelagic Cormorants intermingled in with them.



*Red-faced Cormorant*



*Pelagic Cormorant*

It was time to head back to the Martha's where we had some refreshments and then again explored the river area in the evening sunshine. It was much more productive than the previous day with lots of Reed Buntings, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker a pair of Three-toed Woodpeckers and a pair of Rough-legged Buzzards



*Three-toed Woodpecker*



*Rough-legged Buzzard*

It was a good evenings birding.

### **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May**

Today was the start of the Ring of Fire cruise however as we were not due to be picked up until 2pm we decided to head to the hills behind where we were staying. Martha again made us breakfast at 5.00 am and were we soon out walking through the village and fields and eventually we reached the birch trees. As the weather was good we expected it to be very birdy but it wasn't and despite walking for over 4 hours through the trees we only saw a few Olive backed Pipits and Taiga Flycatchers and the occasional Eye-browed Thrush with the best bird being a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers. We walked a long way for very little reward.



*Lesser-spotted Woodpecker*



*Great-spotted Woodpecker*

We made our way down and had an early lunch returning to Martha's along the river where we connected with a nice male Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Martha drove us to the pickup point and we transferred to a minibus and headed to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky where the Spirit of Endeby was docked. We were soon aboard and settle in our cabin which was going to be our home for the next two weeks. In the harbour before we had even set off, we saw our first alcid of the trip a Tufted Puffin. Following the mandatory safety briefing we set sail through Avacha Bay towards the Bering Sea. As soon as we were in the bay, we came across more alcid's. There were plenty of Common Guillemot's a few Pigeon Guillemot's and a singled Spectacled Guillemot and more Tufted Puffins. Red-face Cormorants and Black Legged Kittiwakes flew alongside the boat.



*Ancient Murrelet*



*Tufted Puffin*

As we headed out of the bay, we hit a big bank of mist reducing visibility substantially however we still managed to see large numbers of Ancient Murrelet's flying by and sitting on the water.





*Heading into The Mist Leaving Avacha Bay*

The mist eventually got thicker and apart from a Northern Fulmar very little extra was seen so we headed down below deck for dinner. Little did we realise that the mist was going to be a constant feature of the trip.

### **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May**

Woke to find the thick mist was persisting and visibility was down to about 20 meters not what one wanted for sea watching. We did try from time to time spending an hour or two on deck each time, but birds were few and far between with the best being a couple Laysan Albatross, lots of Tufted Puffins and at least two Fork -tailed Petrels. As we pressed on towards the Commander Islands the mist continued, and we thought it was in of the day when suddenly about 6pm it cleared, and we were into bright sunshine. Birds were more plentiful as we could now see them. Almost immediately there was a shout of whale and we had distant views of a Fin Whale. We saw our first Red Phalaropes of the trip and both dark and light phase Northern Fulmars circled the ship.



*Fork-tailed Petrel*



*Laysan Albatross*

We had a quick dinner as we didn't want to waste the good weather and we were soon on deck again where there was a shout of Whale. This time we got quite close and had great views of a Humpbacked Whale as it lazied around by the side of the boat. A couple of Fork tailed Petrels and hundreds of Short tailed shearwaters circled the boat.

It was a great end to what we thought was going to be a poor day due to the weather

### Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May

The ship arrived off Bering Island during the night and spent a few hours drifting before starting the engines at first light and heading to the small settlement of Nikol'skyoe. We were up on deck just as it was getting light and in the early morning sunshine marvelled at the huge numbers of alcids on the sea and flying past the ship. Black-legged Kittiwakes and Northern Fulmars circled the boat and the occasional Red-faced Cormorant flew by.



*Tufted Puffin*

The boat anchored off the settlement and whilst we were having breakfast the crew went ashore to clear the paperwork. The first Zodiac left at 8am and very soon we were all on shore and ready to do what we wanted. We left the main group and after watching some Snow Buntings flying around the deserted buildings, we walked to a grassy area near a radio mast where there were a couple of Lapland Buntings in the long grass. Whilst attempting to get some shots we heard a strange song which we eventually identified as the flight song of a Pechora Pipit which eventually landed in the grass.



*Lapland Bunting*



*Snow Bunting*

Heading to the nearby rocky shore we came across a party of waders including some Tattlers and two Terek Sandpipers but no Rock Sandpiper. We walked along the coastal bay to another rocky outcrop where we eventually came across several Rock Sandpipers and some Red-necked Stints in summer plumage.



*Rock Sandpiper*



*Red-necked Stint*

Continuing on we followed a large creek inland where there were plenty of Lapland Buntings in the long grass and in an area of short grass a pair of Mongolian Plovers were found running around and by their action must have had a nest nearby. The nearby creek held Dunlin some more Red-necked Stints and four Eurasian Teal and a few Glaucous-winged Gulls.



*Glaucous-winged Gull*



*Mongolian Sandplover*

We returned to the coast and walk slowly back to the landing site calling in at the small museum on route which was well worth visiting as it gave a good insight to the history of the area. Whilst waiting for the Zodiac's we had a look at the waders we had seen just after we had landed and were surprised to hear both Wandering and Grey Tailed Tattlers calling. They were a bit distance but, in the end, we believe we saw both species. All too quickly we had to return to the ship and whilst we had a quick lunch the boat headed towards a small islet called Ariy Kamen Island. We were soon back in the Zodiacs and spent a couple of hours cruising round the Island which was teeming with thousands of birds perched on the rocky cliffs. On the Alcid front there were Common Guillemot's in their thousands with many hundreds of Brunnich's Guillemot's and the ever-present Tufted Puffins. The cliffs also held large numbers Black-legged Kittiwakes with a few of the smaller and darker mantled Red-legged Kittiwakes mixed in with them. This was a major target which we were happy to connect with. On the mammal front there was a large colony of Steller's Sealions. It was a very enjoyable two hours in perfect waters and brilliant sunshine, and we could have spent much longer there.





*Red-legged Kittiwake*



*Stella's Sea Lions*

Returning to the boat we set a southerly course along the coast of Bering Island looking for whales. We saw a few Dales Porpoise and a very distant Sperm Whale, and some saw a pod of Beaked Whales. As the weather was still very good, we weighed anchor and headed to shore in the Zodiacs and spent an hour ashore before cruising along the coast where we came across an Arctic Fox.



*Arctic Fox*



*Red-necked Phalarope*

It was soon time to return to the boat. It had been an excellent day

### **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May**

Overnight the boat had made its way to Medney Island and we were on deck at 6am as it was getting light. It was yet again a stunning day with wall to wall blue skies the sun shining and the sea like a millpond. The ship anchored in Peschanya Bay and following an early breakfast we headed to the shore in the Zodiacs where we explored the grasslands and surrounding cliffs.



*Peschanya Bay*

The sea held good numbers of Common Eider of the sub species *v-nigra* though they were never very close. Once ashore it didn't take long to find Pacific Wren and the grassy areas held good numbers of Lapland Buntings and Pechora Pipits.



*Pacific Wren*



*Pechora Pipit*

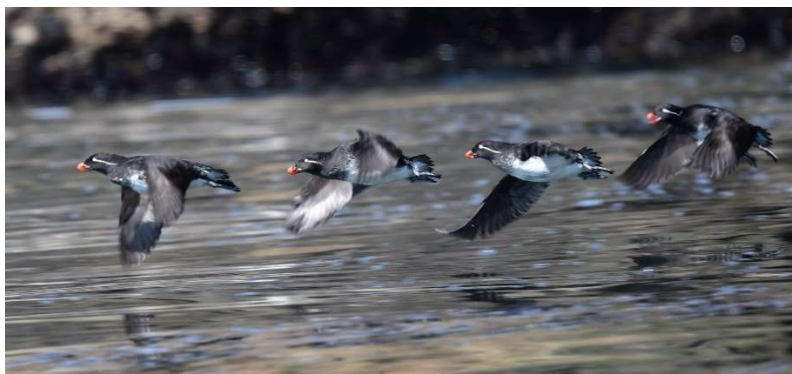
The rocky cliffs held Horned Puffins and thousands of Northern Fulmar. Abdel trekked high up the grassy slopes that overlooked the steep cliffs where he managed to find a pair of Grey-crowned Rosy Finch flitting around the cliffs.



*Tufted Puffin*



After two hours we again boarded the Zodiacs and headed to a rocky headland where we were soon seeing Parakeet Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots Horned and Tufted Puffins in good numbers. We heard a Wren singing but failed to find any Rosyfinch on the cliffs. A Sea Otter was seen frolicking in the sea but was not very cooperative in front of the lens.





All too soon it was time to go we could have a spent another hour there at least as we had time. Back on the boat we headed back between Bering and Medney Islands and where we hit fog again and although it cleared for a while it was never far away limiting the chances of finding any Whales. As we set course for the Kamchatka Peninsula we headed into the thick fog. Several sessions watching from the deck produced a few Fork-tailed Storm Petrels plus the usual birds. As dusk fell the sea started to get a little bit rougher hopefully the wind will blow the fog away.



*Parakeet Auklet*



*Pigeon Guillemot*

### **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

Overnight we sailed towards Kamchatka Peninsula and by first light we were still a few hours away. It was still foggy outside, but we preserved on deck but only saw the usual birds. Just before 11am the Kamchatka coast appeared out of the gloom and we sailed into the mouth of the Zhupanova River. We scanned for Long Billed Murrelet and although visibility was quite good, we couldn't find one. It was cold, misty and raining making birding very hard as we headed upriver in the Zodiacs. We stopped briefly at a group of Largha Seals before carrying on up steam to a Steller's Sea Eagle nest where a perched adult put on a good display.



*Steller's Sea Eagle*



*Largha Seal*

Due to the weather we quickly headed back down the river and returned to the ship for a late lunch during which the ship moved further down the coast to Bukta Morzhovaya Bay a large fjord and as we entered a Brown Bear was seen by a few people foraging on the shore. We dropped anchor and again boarded the zodiacs and headed to where the bear had been seen but there was no sign. We moved across to the other side of the bay and eventually found a Brown bear feeding on a grassy slope





*Brown Bear*



The bear eventually moved off into an area of bushes, so we cruised along the shoreline and came across a small flock of Harlequin Ducks and a Red-breasted Merganser before eventually returning to the ship. That night the ship slowly made its way down the coast to Bukta Russkaya.

### **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

First light found us drifting slowly outside the fjord and it was not long before the engines were started and we headed in. There were plenty of the usual Alcids as we scanned continuously looking for the two targets Thick-billed and Kittlitz's Murrelet's. A small alcid flew by the boat but frustratingly it didn't land and was lost to sight. The ship passed two naval vessels at the entrance to the Fjord and as we sailed further in, we could see two small alcids on the water and as the ship passed, we could identify them as Long Billed Murrelet a major target.



*Long-billed Murrelet*



As the ship weighed anchor, we spotted another Murrelet on the sea and as it was, so calm managed to put the scope on it and obtain good views of another Long-billed Murrelet. We continued to scan the surrounding sea hoping to find the next major target Kittlitz's but no sign. Boarding the Zodiacs, we slowly made our way to the Long-billed Murrelet and obtain quite good views before it flew. Considering this was the only location we had any chance of seeing Kittlitz's Murrelet we had an all too quick motor around the area, finding our first Goosander and then brief views of a Bear before heading to the beach and landing. Why we didn't spend longer looking I don't know. On land we were limited in where we could go due to bears being in the area. There was a small patch of birch trees close to the shore which produced several passerines including Siberian Rubythroat, Grey and Rustic Bunting, Eyebrowed and Brown headed Thrush, Rock Ptarmigan and a fly over Common Redpoll. By now the lingering mist had lifted and it was warm and sunny.



*Bukta Russkaya*

We returned to the Zodiac's and were taken back to the ship which then slowly made its way towards the sound entrance. The zodiacs followed. It would have been much better if we had been allowed to stay in the zodiacs to give us the chance of finding the Kittlitz's. At the entrance we again boarded the Zodiacs and headed out to some rocks where there was a colony of Steller's Sea Lions, and a couple of Steller's Sea Eagles were perched on the surrounding cliffs. Returning to the ship we started to sail south along the Kamchatka coastline. For once the mist had lifted and spells of seawatching produced Black-throated Diver plus thousands of Fulmars and a good number of Tufted Puffins and Common Guillemot. A short sea watch after dinner produced very little but did provide stunning views of the Volcanos. As we retired for the night the ship headed south towards the Kuril Islands



*Kamchatka Volcanos*



### **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

Yet again woke to thick fog which showed no sign of clearing. We were hoping that the mist would lift but as we approached Bird Rocks there was no sign of this happening and so we boarded the Zodiac's and cruised around a small set of rocks which despite the fog was good with excellent views of Sea Otter, Harbour and Spotted Seal and thousands of Common Guillemot and plenty of Tufted Puffins and few Parakeet Auklets. It was ashame about the fog as it made photography quite difficult.



*Parakeet Auklet*



*Sea Otter*

We returned to the ship which then set a course through the second Straights to the Sea of Okholsk and onto the island of Atlasova. We saw very little as the thick fog persisted. Just before we arrived the fog lifted and in front of us we could see the snow-capped Volcano dominating the skyline. After lunch we boarded the Zodiacs and spent three hours exploring the island. There were a couple of large pools which held a good selection of ducks including at least three Falcated and six Tufted as well as Mallard, Eurasian Teal and Wigeon. The bushes held a Middendorfs Grasshopper Warbler which proved a bit elusive and a couple of Kamchatka Leaf Warblers as well as Brown-headed Thrush and a Chiffchaff which was a real surprise.



*Middendorfs Grasshopper Warbler*



*Chiffchaff*

The grassy areas had Buff-bellied Pipit and Eurasian Skylark. We had to leave at 5.30 which was a shame as we then spent the next hour doing nothing on the boat before it finally setting sail at 7.30 back into the fog.



## **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June**

Woke a bit late and by the time we were on deck we had already anchored off the coast Onekotan Island. The sea was full of Northern Fulmars. After an early breakfast we boarded the Zodiacs and went ashore where surprisingly we flushed a small flock of duck including a single Spot-billed. The wind had picked, and it had started to rain. As there were bears on the island, we had to stay in groups which was not good for birding. We decided to do a long walk to the lake which took us across some open low scrub. The wind made seeing anything quite difficult however scanning the seas from the cliff did produce our only White-winged Scoter of the trip. Not much was seen on the return leg and it was not long before we were all aboard the ship and heading to Ekarama Island. The island is home for the local race of Crackling Goose which has recently been reintroduced. Using the Zodiac's, we cruised around the coastline and very soon found two birds feeding on the grassy slopes. We also found a few Rhinoceros Auklets on the sea the only place we managed good views of them on the trip



*Rhinoceros Auklet*



*Ancient Murrelet*

The sea and cliffs were teeming with vast numbers of Northern Fulmars



*Northern Fulmars*

## **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June**

First light saw us just offshore of Simushir Island a former Soviet Submarine base built on the shores of the Calder of an extinct volcano. It was still foggy outside, but it cleared a little as we sailed closer and soon, we were in the Zodiacs heading through the gap in the caldera to shore. The surrounding shore and hillsides were dotted with decaying buildings some quite large that use to house the bases personnel and their families. The buildings long ago abandoned were now were in a state of decay

and slowly nature was taking over with low trees and bushes growing where there had once been roads



Exploring the bushes there appeared to be a Siberian Rubythroat in every bush and singing from every vantage point. Kamchatka Leaf Warblers were also common, but they were a bit more elusive though it was not long before good views were obtained. The bushes also held a few of the Grey-bellied form Eurasian Bulfinch and we had brief flyby views of two Pine Grosbeaks including a male.



*Siberian Rubythroat*



*Kamchatka Leaf Warbler*

Considering there are no tall trees the island holds a population of Nutcrackers and it was not long after landing that we had one fly over calling. We spent several hours exploring the bushes and low tress around the deserted building before heading back to the ship.

As the Zodiac approached the ship a juvenile Short-tailed Albatross flew in out of the mist and landed on the water providing brief views before it flew and disappeared back into the mist. We were soon back on board and scanning the seas and it was not long before another Short-tailed Albatross came in quickly followed by a Black footed but neither of them lingered however it was not a bad five minutes. During lunch we sailed north and when the mist lifted, we headed back on deck. It was not long when the shout of Orca went up and after a bit of manoeuvring of the boat, we had stunning views as a pod of about ten swam next to the boat.



*Short-tailed Albatross*



*Orca*

There were good numbers of Laysan Albatross and another two Short Tailed and about 15 Fork tailed petrels. The good weather didn't last for long and we soon back in the mist and although we preserved, we saw very little except good numbers of Crested and Whiskered Auklets on the sea and in flight as the boat pushed northwards towards Yankicha. At about 5pm we arrived at Yankicha and were very soon in the Zodiacs heading into the calder through the narrow opening. There were a few crested Auklets on the open sea but only a few Harlequin Ducks on the still calder waters We landed near some hot springs and checked out the beach area with the only real bird of note being a Peregrine. As the evening progressed, we could see good numbers of Crested Auklets had started to arrive, so we boarded the zodiacs and headed towards the vast rafts of them. It seemed that as every minute went by more and more birds would arrive and very soon the sea was carpeted with Crested Auklets and sky was full of thousands of birds swirling around and landing at their burrows.



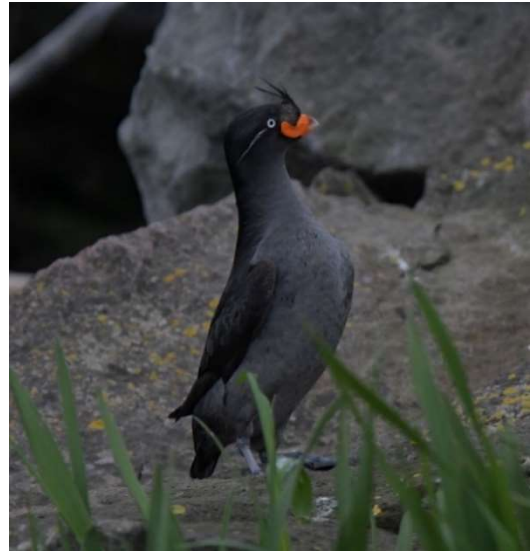
*Crested Auklets*

We cruised along the edge of the grassy slopes which were filling up rapidly with the returning birds. By far the majority of birds were Crested Auklets but we did manage to find a few Whiskered perched amongst them.





*Whiskered Auklet*



*Crested Auklet*

As it got darker, we headed out to the open sea which was now full of Whiskered Auklets which unlike Crested Auklets tended to wait until after dusk before returning to their nesting burrows. The sea was full of large rafts of them and even larger numbers swirled around in the sky waiting for dusk.



*Whiskered Auklet*



*Crested Auklet*



*Whiskered Auklet*

As it got dark, we reluctantly returned to the ship with the sound of the calling Auklets ringing in our ears. It had been billed as stunning experience and it certainly lived up to its billing.

### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June

Woke to find us floating off Brat Chirpoy Island and we were in the zodiacs for a pre breakfast cruise around the headland. The cliffs were full of thousands of Alcids mainly Brunnich's Guillemot's and Common Guillemot with a few Horned and Tufted Puffins. The lower rocks held good numbers Pigeon Guillemots with some showing no white at all and others just showing a small amount indicating they were the Kuril form



*Kuril Guillemots*



*Common Guillemot*



*Brunnich's Guillemot*

As we returned to the boat a small pod of Orca's was seen in the distance, but they didn't put on a display as per the previous day. Back on board we had breakfast then a spell of seawatching produced a another pod of about 6 Orca's plus two Short-tailed and a single Black-footed Albatross and the usual alcids gulls and Fulmars. We arrived at Urup Island just before lunch but due to a large swell we couldn't land at the usual place. The rest of the afternoon was spent cruising down the coast of the island looking for a suitable landing spot which never materialised. A late afternoon seawatch did produce an adult Short-tailed Albatross and a summer plumage White-billed diver on the sea and a Sperm Whale put on a brief show before diving.





*Short-tailed Albatross 2<sup>nd</sup> Year*



*Adult*

A post dinner sea watch produced Arctic and Long-tailed Skua's two Short-tailed Albatross's and a few Fork-tailed Petrels. By now Short-tailed Shearwaters far outnumbered the Fulmars. We saw at least one Hump-backed Whale and two other sightings of Whales which we couldn't identify for sure

### **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June**

An early morning seawatch as we approached Iturup Island produced a small flock of Black-tailed Gulls a Black-throated Diver and Spectacle Guillemot. The ship anchored off shore of the main town and by 9am we were all ashore waiting to be allocated a 4-wheel drive vehicle. The landing spot held a pair of Black-faced Buntings and a fly over Oriental Turtle Dove



We were all loaded into a fleet of 4-wheel drives and headed through the small town towards the higher interior of the island. We stopped at a high vantage point and checked out the bushes and low trees. A distant calling Oriental Cuckoo was soon located. There were several Japanese Bush Warblers calling and one was quite showy but despite an extensive search we couldn't find any Japanese Accentors. As usual all too quickly we were back in the cars and heading to the hot springs for lunch. Whilst the main party bathed, we checked out the bushes and had very brief views of Japanese Robin. There was a party of Eastern Buzzards over the hills and a Siskin flew over calling a couple of times. On the return to the landing site we made a brief stop at the highpoint but saw very little however a stop on the outskirts of town did produce two Chestnut-cheek Starling. It took a long time to ferry everybody back to the ship and whilst waiting for the Zodiac a White-tailed Sea Eagle flew over. A sea watch from the top deck as the boat slowly cruised down the coast produced another White-billed Diver on the sea and over thirty other Divers including at least one Pacific and one Black-throated. A brief post dinner sea watch revealed large rafts of Short-tailed Shearwaters on the flat calm seas

### **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June**

Due to the weather we couldn't land at the usual spot on the Pacific side of Kunashir island, so we headed for a new landing point on the The Sea of Okhotsk side which the ship had never been visited before. As it got light the ship slowly made its approach to the anchoring site and for once it was an early start and we were all ashore just after 8am. As we landed three Latham's Snipe were seen displaying above a marshy area close to the shore. Some park rangers were on shore to meet us and we were again divided up into groups as there was the possibility of Bears. We left the beach and headed inland along a wide track and were surprised to see four Mandarin Duck including a fine male fly by and then again sat on a small puddle for a brief time. As it was early morning birding was good with a pair of Bull-headed Shrike and a stunning Narcissa Flycatcher



*Narcissa Flycatcher*



*Marsh Tit*

The ranger had a Blakiston's Fish Owl nest staked out which we visited but the chicks which had recently left the nest were nowhere to be seen. We continued along the track and heard a distant Black Woodpecker, Abdel's boggy bird. We didn't expect to see it but then one called close to us and we all eventually got reasonable views. One happy Abdel. The track eventually ended and so we started to retrace our steps. As we walked slowly back, we suddenly heard the low booming of a the Blakiston's Fish Owl calling from the other side of the valley. We scanned the valley side and one of the party showed us a photo of a bird she had just taken which was the owl. A few people managed to see it before it flew off. Although it continued to call now and then we couldn't find it again. We arrived back at the beach and all too soon had to return to the ship.



*Spectacled Guillemot*



*Rhinoceros Auklet*



As we were having lunch the ship set a course for Sakhalin. From the boat a few Spectacled Guillemots and Rhinoceros Auklets were seen from the bow of the boat and a few mixed flocks of Divers flew by but very soon we hit thick mist again. The few stints of seawatching produced very little except very large flocks of Short-tailed Shearwaters.

### **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June**

Woke to find the ship moored off the port waiting for a berth to become free. Eventually it did and as we entered the port a Glaucous Gull flew over. We disembarked for the last time and were soon on a bus to our hotel which took about an hour. We were soon checked in and ready to start birding in Park Gagarina opposite the hotel. It was not long before we heard a Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler calling from the undergrowth but we only managed brief glimpses. We followed the river and left the park and walked along a series of tracks on the adjacent valley hill side. This time we found a very cooperative Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler that posed for a few pictures.



*Siskin*



*Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler*

Then to our surprise we heard a Black Woodpecker call and we got good views of a pair as they fed in the trees. The weather began to look ominous with spots of rain starting to fall but we carried on and soon heard a Sakhalin Leaf Warbler singing. It took a long time to get reasonable views of it though the rain and terrain didn't help. The spots had turned to heavier rain but as usual we persevered but birding in the rain is never easy and apart from a pair of Narcissa Flycatchers and a Siskin very little was seen so we retired to the hotel to dry off a bit.



*Black Woodpecker*



*Japanese Tit*

By 6pm the rain had abated and so we ventured out again but birding in the dull conditions was not very productive and as the light faded, we returned to the hotel for a late dinner and bed.

### Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June

We left the hotel when it was still dark and headed to the park looking for Ural Owl but all we could hear was a barking dog. Day break revealed another gloomy day. Rufus-tailed Robins were calling as were Sakhalin Grasshopper Warblers and after a lot of effort we managed to work out what was calling from high in a tree a Radde's Warbler we didn't expect to see one so high.



*Eurasian Bulfinch*



*Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler*

We returned to the hotel packed and headed to the airport where we caught our flight back to Hong Kong via Vladivostok. It had been an interesting trip and completely different from anything I had done before

### Systematic List

#### **Rock Ptarmigan** *Lagopus muta*

Two Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

#### **Black-billed Capercaillie** *Tetrao urogalloides*

One in hills behind Yelizovo 26<sup>th</sup> May. One on the Yelizovo Radar station road 27<sup>th</sup> May

#### **Lesser Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis parvipes*

Two Ekarma Island 4<sup>th</sup> June. These were birds from the re-introduction programme

#### **Falcated Teal** *Anas falcate*

Three Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June

#### **Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas Penelope*

Five Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June

#### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Two Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June, six Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June, five Onkotan Island 4<sup>th</sup> June and three Yankicha Island 5<sup>th</sup> June

#### **Spot-billed Duck** *Anas zonorhyncha*

One Onkotan Island 4<sup>th</sup> June

#### **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Two Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June and one Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June

#### **Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*

Four Commander Island Bering Island 30<sup>th</sup> May, six Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June

#### **Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata*



Four Kunashir Island 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Six Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Two Hundred Avacha Bay 27<sup>th</sup> May, three Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June and twenty Atlasova Island 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

Only seen at Medney Island – Peschanya Bay with twenty 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*

Small numbers seen almost daily with a maximum of twenty Commander Island Bering Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi stejnegeri*

One Onkotan Island 4<sup>th</sup> June

**Black Scoter** *Melanitta Americana*

One Commander Island Bering Island 30<sup>th</sup> May, Fifty-one Onkotan Island 4<sup>th</sup> June, one Yankicha Island 5<sup>th</sup> June and seven Brat Chirpoy 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

Two Avacha Bay 27<sup>th</sup> May

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

Singles Bukta Russkaya, 2<sup>nd</sup> June and Onkotan Island 4<sup>th</sup> June

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Two Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May, five Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June, and three Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellate*

Three Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

One Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June, Two Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Pacific Diver** *Gavia pacifica*

Singles Urup Island 6<sup>th</sup> June, and one Iturup Island 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Pacific/Black-throated Diver Sp**

Thirty Iturup Island 7<sup>th</sup> June and eleven Kunashir Island 8<sup>th</sup> June

**White-billed Diver** *Gavia adamsii*

One Urup Island 6<sup>th</sup> June, One Iturup Island 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Laysan Albatross** *Phoebastria immutabilis*

See on eight days during the cruise with a high count of twenty

**Black-footed Albatross** *Phoebastria nigripes*

One Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June, two Urup 6<sup>th</sup> June

**Short-tailed Albatross** *Phoebastria albatrus*

A total of six seen daily on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> June whilst at sea

**Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Seen daily during the cruise with vast numbers at the breeding grounds in the Kuril Islands

**Mottled Petrel** *Pterodroma inexpectata*

One Bering Sea 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris*

Seen almost daily during the cruise with very large numbers around the Southern Kuril's

**Fork-tailed Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis*

See on six days during the Cruise with a maximum daily count of twenty

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

Two Avacha Bay 27<sup>th</sup> May, One Brat Chirpoy 6<sup>th</sup> June

**Pelagic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*

Seen on eleven days with a high daily count of fifty

**Temminck's Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax capillatus*

One Brat Chirpoy 6<sup>th</sup> June, Two Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Red-faced Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax urile*

Seen on seven days with a high count of fifty Avacha Bay

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

One Yankicha Island 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

One Iturup Island 7<sup>th</sup> June

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*

One Iturup Island 7<sup>th</sup> June, One Kunashir Island 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Steller's Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus pelagicus*

Two Avacha Bay 27<sup>th</sup> May, four Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June, three Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

One Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Eastern Buzzard** *Buteo japonicus*

Five Iturup Island 7<sup>th</sup> June, Two Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June, One Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

Two Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May and one same location 28<sup>th</sup> May. One Onkotan Island 4<sup>th</sup> June

**Lesser Sandplover** *Charadrius mongolus*

Eight Commander island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Latham's Snipe** *Gallinago hardwickii*

Three Kunashir island 8<sup>th</sup> June. One Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

One Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May



**Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*

Three Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana*

At least one Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Grey-tailed Tattler** *Heteroscelus brevipes*

Two Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May, Four Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*

Two Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*

Up to six Yelizovo River, three Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May and one Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*

Thirty Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Rock Sandpiper** *Calidris ptilocnemis*

Fifteen Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Ten Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Bering Sea five 29<sup>th</sup> May, two 30<sup>th</sup> May and one 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

One at Sea 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**Black-tailed Gull** *Larus crassirostris*

Fifteen Iturup harbour area 7<sup>th</sup> June, ten Sakhalin Harbour 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Common Gull** *Larus canus kamtschtschensis*

One Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Glaucous-winged Gull** *Larus glaucescens*

Only seen on Commander and Medney islands 30/31<sup>st</sup> May where a maximum count of three hundred

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

One Sakhalin Harbour 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Slaty-backed Gull** *Larus schistisagus*

Seen at all locations with the exception of the Commander and Medney Islands. Counts often into the many hundreds

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

Only seen in Kamchatka with up to three hundred in Avacha Bay 27<sup>th</sup> May

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla pollicaris*

Good numbers seen daily whilst at sea or near the coast. Breeding colonies at Commander island held many thousands

**Red-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa brevirostris*

Only seen at Commander Island where at least 150 were seen on the breeding cliffs

**Common Tern** *Sterna Hirundo*

Two 26<sup>th</sup> and six 27<sup>th</sup> Yelizovo River. Fifteen Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One off Urup Island 6<sup>th</sup> June

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

One at Bering Sea 29<sup>th</sup> May, Three off Kamchatka coast 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

One at Bering Sea 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Common Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

Seen almost daily during the cruise, especially common on the breeding cliffs at Commander island with at five thousand

**Brunnich's Guillemot** *Uria lomvia*

Seen daily but not in such large numbers as Common

**Pigeon Guillemot** *Cephus columba*

Small numbers seen on most days near land with the exception of the Southern Kuril's

**Kuril Guillemot** *Cephus [columba] snowi*

"Pure" birds only seen in the southern Kuril's, but intergrades seen as far as the Kamchatka peninsular

**Spectacled Guillemot** *Cephus carbo*

Pure birds only seen in the southern Kuril's where they were uncommon

**Long-billed Murrelet** *Brachyramphus marmoratus*

Three Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Ancient Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*

Three Hundred Avacha Bay 28<sup>th</sup> May. Small numbers seen daily from Zhupanova River south

**Crested Auklet** *Aethia cristatella*

Thirty seen at sea 4<sup>th</sup> June, possibly millions seen Yankicha 5<sup>th</sup> June and small numbers seen at sea 6<sup>th</sup> June

**Parakeet Auklet** *Aethia psittacula*

Forty Medney Island 31<sup>st</sup> May and seven Bird Rocks 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**Whiskered Auklet** *Aethia pygmaea*

At least one at sea 4<sup>th</sup> June and vast numbers coming into roost Yankicha 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Rhinoceros Auklet** *Cerorhinca monocerata*

Singles seen at Ekarrma nd Brat Chirpoy 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> June. Twenty at sea off Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Horned Puffin** *Fratercula corniculata*

Uncommon. One hundred and fifty Medney Island 31<sup>st</sup> May, seven at sea 1<sup>st</sup> June, ten Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June and four Brat Chirpoy 6<sup>th</sup> June

**Tufted Puffin** *Fratercula cirrhata*

Common sea daily in good numbers in all locations including at sea during the Cruise.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

One Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, eight Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturates*

One seen and six heard Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, one Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June and heard daily Sakhalin 9/10 June

**Blakinstons's Fish Owl** *Ketupa blakistoni*

One heard and seen briefly Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus*

Up to thirty seen daily at Iturup, Kunashir and Sakhalin 7-10<sup>th</sup> June

**Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos kizuki*

One Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June, One Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Lesser-spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos minor*

One Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May and one same location 28<sup>th</sup> May

**Great-spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Four Yelizovo River 28<sup>th</sup> May, two Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June and one same location 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides tridactylus*

Two Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May

**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius*

Three Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June. Two Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Bull-headed Shrike** *Lanius Bucephalus*

Three Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Common Magpie** *Pica*

Two seen daily Yelizovo River area 26-28<sup>th</sup> May

**Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Two Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

Up to twenty seen daily Yelizovo area

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*

Thirty Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, six Kunashir 7<sup>th</sup> June and seen daily Sakhalin 9/10<sup>th</sup> June

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

Two Yelizovo 28<sup>th</sup> June, up to fifteen see Commander/Medney island's 30/31<sup>st</sup> May and five Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Japanese Tit** *Periparus major*



Six Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June and two 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*

Two Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June, one Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, four Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June and small numbers seen daily on Sakhalin

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*

Twenty Yelizovo Radar Station Road 27<sup>th</sup> May and four Yelizovo 28<sup>th</sup> May

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*

Two Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June, four Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June and one 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

One Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

One Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May, three Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May, six Atlasova 3<sup>rd</sup> June, one Onekotan 4<sup>th</sup> June, and one heard Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Japanese Bush Warbler** *Cettia diphone*

One seen many heard Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, heard Kunashir and Sakhalin

**Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella ochotensis*

One Atlasova 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella amnicola*

Two seen and many heard Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June. Many heard same location 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Pallas' Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

One Sakhalin 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Sakhalin Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealoides*

Two Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June. One heard Sakhalin 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Kamchatka Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus examinandus*

Two Atlasova, ten Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June, heard Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, one heard Sakhalin 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Raddes' Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

Two Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June and one seen and one heard same location 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus tristis*

One Atlasova 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes*

Heard Onekotan 4<sup>th</sup> June, and heard Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Pacific Wren** *Troglodytes pacificus*

One Medney Island 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*

Six Yelizovo Radar Station Road 27<sup>th</sup> May, four Yelizovo River 28<sup>th</sup> May, four daily Sakhalin 9/10<sup>th</sup> June

**Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

One Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June

**Chestnut-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus philippensis*

Two Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*

Fifteen Yelizovo Radar Station Road 27<sup>th</sup> May, two Yelizovo hills 28<sup>th</sup> May

**Brown-headed Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus*

Up to six seen daily at Bukta Russkaya, Atlasova Island, Simushir Island and Sakhalin

**Japanese Robin** *Erithacus akahige*

One seen and ten heard Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, one heard Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

Seen on all of the Kuril Islands with a maximum of twenty Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Swinhoe's Robin** *Erithacus sibilans*

One Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June, one heard 9<sup>th</sup> June and two seen 10<sup>th</sup> June Sakhalin

**Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa daurica*

One Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Narcissus Flycatcher** *Ficedula narcissina*

Two Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June, four Sakhalin 9<sup>th</sup> June and two 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

Up to six daily Yelizovo area, One Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June, One Atlasova 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Four Yelizovo River 27<sup>th</sup> May

**Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*

One Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Small numbers seen Yelizovo area and Sakhalin. Two Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Japanese Accentor** *Prunella rubida*

One Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis taivana*

One at sea 6<sup>th</sup> June

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Small numbers seen at many locations

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

Seen daily with *lugens* being the commoner of the two

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

Up to twenty daily Yelizovo area 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May, One Bukta Russakaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June, one Sakhalin 10<sup>th</sup> June

**Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*

One Commander island 30<sup>th</sup> May, Four Medney Island 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens japonicus*

Up to six seen daily Atlasova, Onekotan, Simushir and Yankicha Islands

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Two Yelizovo Radar Road 27<sup>th</sup> May

**Oriental Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica*

Up to three daily Yelizovo area 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May, three Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June, two Onekotan 4<sup>th</sup> June, four Kunashir 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelius spinus*

Two Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, Up to four daily Sakhalin 9/10<sup>th</sup> June

**Common Redpoll** *Carduelius flames*

One Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Grey-crowned Rosy Finch** *Leucosticte tephrocotis*

Two Medney Island 31<sup>st</sup> May

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

One Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Pine Grosbeak** *Pinicola enucleator*

Two Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Grey-bellied Eurasian Bulfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula griseiventris*

Two Yelizovo 27<sup>th</sup> May, four Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June, one Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes*

One Yelizovo Radar Road 27<sup>th</sup> May, eight Yelizovo hills 28<sup>th</sup> May

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*

Up to eight daily Yelizovo area 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May, two Zhupanova River 1<sup>st</sup> June, two Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*

Three Iturup 7<sup>th</sup> June, Up to three seen daily Sakhalin

**Grey Bunting** *Emberiza variabilis*

Two Yelizovo Radar Road 27<sup>th</sup> May, One Bukta Russkaya 2<sup>nd</sup> June, One Simushir 5<sup>th</sup> June

**Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Up to ten daily Yelizovo area 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May, six Atlasova 3<sup>rd</sup> June, two Onekotan 4<sup>th</sup> June

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

Up to twenty daily Commander and Medney islands 30-31<sup>st</sup> May



**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Five Commander Island 30<sup>th</sup> May, two Medney island 31<sup>st</sup> May